

Testimony of Robert Burns, Executive Director
The Mattatuck Museum
February 17, 2017
Connecticut General Assembly
Appropriations Committee

**RE: RESTORATION OF FUNDING FROM THE STATE BUDGET TO THE ART
MUSEUM CONSORTIUM**

To the esteemed members of the Appropriations committee, my name is Bob Burns and I am director of the Mattatuck Museum located in Waterbury. In December of this year the museum will celebrate the 140th anniversary of its founding.

I would like to offer the following comments on behalf of The Mattatuck and my partners in the Art Museum Consortium – the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art (Ridgefield); the Bruce Museum (Greenwich); the Florence Griswold Museum (Old Lyme); the Hill-Stead Museum (Farmington); the Lyman Allyn Art Museum (New London); and New Britain Museum of American Art (New Britain). Formed in 2013, we represent seven independent leading art museums in Connecticut, who collectively offer some of the most exciting and stimulating exhibitions to be found anywhere. Our holdings consist of fine and decorative art treasures of incalculable value. Together we enhance the State's identity as a cultural hub, its attractiveness as a tourism destination, and the unparalleled quality of life found in Connecticut.

We are all most grateful to the Administration and the Legislature for maintaining the Consortium as an item in the budget last year. We understand from our discussion with our representatives and others in the Capital that the structure of our group—that we agree to divide the funding equally between our seven institutions—has been highlighted as a positive model for funding cultural institutions. Our emphasis unity has grown beyond our appeal to the legislature and has led to extensive collaborations between our museums.

We fully understand the enormous financial challenges that State faces. The investment the State makes by supporting the Consortium is exponentially increased because of our collaboration. Collectively we represent a significant impact for Connecticut in creating jobs, attracting visitors, and increasing State revenue. Consortium partners have focused State funding on marketing exhibitions which directly relates to attracting visitors to Connecticut. Each year we are host to hundreds of thousands of visitors from across the country, who stay in hotels, eat in restaurants and purchase goods in shops. Reinstating funding to the budget for the Museum Consortium will have both a collective economic impact across the State and an economic impact in our respective regions. Thank you for the opportunity to address this important issue.